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Earlier, when imagining what I might write, I thought it would be tempting to sing the somewhat conventional praises of pluralism. I began to compose a rousing tune in celebration of the comfortable premise "one artist, one vision." New England, I reminded myself, is not one state but six of varying topologies, material resources, and population densities. Besides, I wanted to be cautious, knowing all too well the danger of generalities and the perils of attributing qualities of form and intent according to regional affiliation.

But I was wrong.

After first reviewing over 2,560 slides by 354 painters and sculptors and then making final selections based on the work of 51 finalists, I realized my earlier fantasy did not apply. I now am struck more by the overlapping of concerns than by the characteristics which distinguish one artist from another. Given the seriousness of the work, I regret publication deadlines prohibit little more than a listing of these perceived themes.

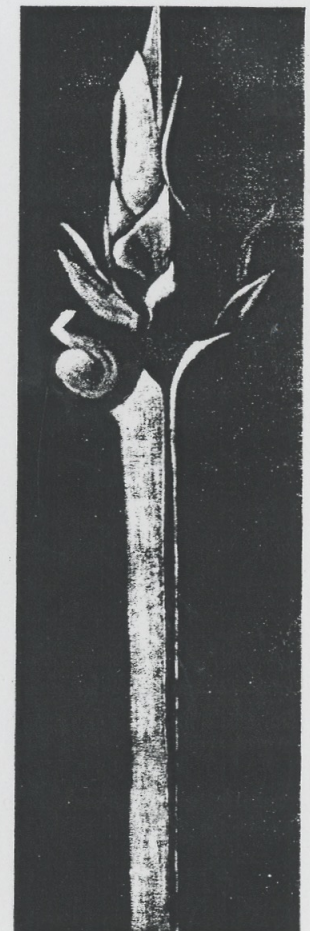
Frequently, botany and biology appear as one discipline, with vegetal parts and human anatomy purposely confused. All is not well in

the garden of Eden. Nightmares, not dreams, persist. Natural form turns threatening, and snakes, pictured repeatedly, are less than tempting. Paradise isn't pastoral, but apocalyptic. The landscape is tainted by acidic color, lit harshly, and fractured. Figures rarely are seen whole nor are people engaged in ordinary pursuits.

Occasionally, a body seen reminds us of pleasure rather than pain, comedy rather than tragedy, birth rather

than death. Ecstasy also is associated with art and the difficulty of its creation, a subject which surfaces in a number of media. More often than not, humor is expressed through a wry, sly, deliberately folksy style. In all the selected work, the gesture and the condition is poignantly human.

I enjoyed the opportunity to imagine twice over the artistic wealth of the region.



Nan Wezniak
 The 7 Pillars of Wisdom: Sagacity, Knowledge, Astuteness

1985 EXHIBITION AT THE BERKSHIRE MUSEUM OF PAINTING & SCULPTURE
 PAGE 2 OF THE CATALOG BY THE BERKSHIRE ART ASSOCIATION